PUBLIC OPINION

IN BULGARIA
ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Department of Public Information has made available its standard questionnaire on public opinion about the United Nations to the Balkan British Social Surveys and was provided with the results of the survey conducted by that organization to assess the awareness, knowledge and image of the UN in Bulgaria.

■ THE RESULTS IN BRIEF

- **Over 80% of Bulgarians are aware of the United Nations. About one fourth of the respondents were able to name at least one UN body or institution.**

- **Maintaining international peace and security as well as promoting human rights are the two UN issues of greatest interest to Bulgarians.**

- **Half of those surveyed believe the UN is doing a good job.**

AWARENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

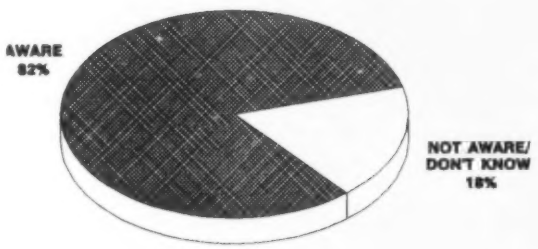

FIGURE 1

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN

Eighty-two per cent of Bulgarians have heard of the United Nations. Awareness levels are highest (near 100 per cent) among university students, professionals and among those who rely on the mass media for information about the UN.

One out of four surveyed is able to name at least one UN institution or body. The Security Council, UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO are the best known UN bodies or institutions among Bulgarians. The ability to name at least one UN body or institution is significantly higher among those with higher education and among those who live in cities. Knowledge

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ABILITY TO NAME A UN INSTITUTION

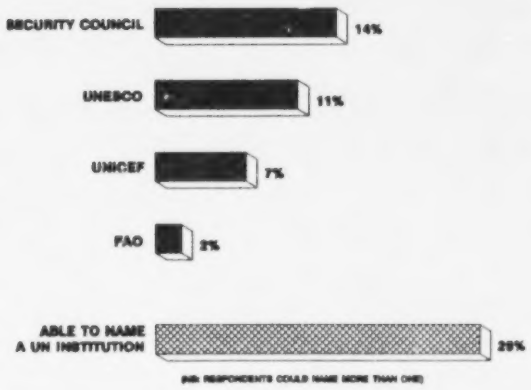

FIGURE 2

UN PERFORMANCE RATING

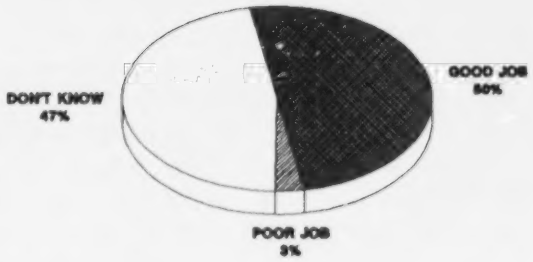

FIGURE 3

levels are the lowest among farmers, village dwellers, and those with primary education or less. The ability to name various UN bodies or institutions is highest among those who were taught about the UN in university, followed by those who rely on print media for information about the Organization.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Fifty two per cent of Bulgarians were able to identify the Secretary-General, at the time the poll was conducted. Compared to older respondents (60 and over), younger Bulgarians were twice as likely to correctly identify the Secretary-General. The highest level of awarness is found among university students (near 100 per cent). Those who rely on newspapers, magazines and books, are more likely to identify the name of the Secretary-General than those who rely on radio or television.

RATING UN PERFORMANCE

Fifty per cent of respondents have a positive opinion about the Organization's performance, compared to three per cent who hold a negative view. Slightly less than half did not evaluate the Organization's performance.

University students and white collar workers hold the most positive views about the United Nations.

REASONS FOR PERFORMANCE RATING

A majority of those who assessed the Organization's performance positively, based their judgment on the UN's role in fostering mutual understanding between nations. United Nations efforts in maintaining world peace as well as providing assistance to countries in need were other major factors. Activities of the UN to promote human rights and solve regional conflicts were also mentioned.

Those who evaluated the work of the Organization negatively, criticized it for what they perceive as being too dependent on the opinions of the powerful countries and its ineffectiveness in solving world problems.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Television is the most used source of information about the Organization, followed by radio, newspapers, magazines and books. However, those who rely on print media have significantly greater levels of awarness and knowledge of the United Nations.

Approximately, one out of eight Bulgarians remembered being taught about the United Nations at school. Most of the teaching takes place at the secondary/ high school level. The teaching about the UN at either elementary or secondary/high school does not appear to be associated with greater awarness or knowledge of the United Nations. On the other hand, when teaching takes place in university, the levels of awarness and knowledge are among the highest found in the population.

INTEREST IN UN ISSUES

About two-thirds of Bulgarians would like more information on the UN's work in the fields of international peace and security, and human rights. Disarmament, environmental protection and the welfare of children are other main UN issues of interest to Bulgarians. Among the issues of least interest are the New World Information Order, African Economic Recovery and Apartheid in South Africa.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE UN

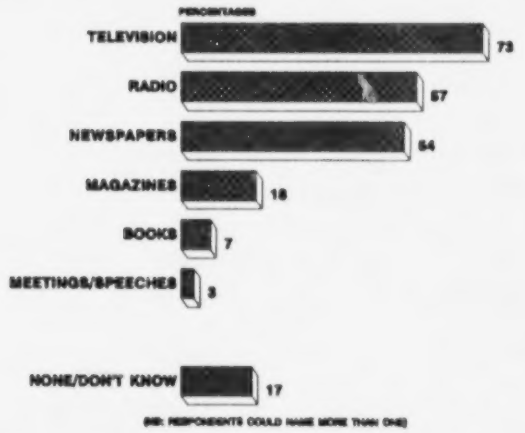

FIGURE 4

TEACHING ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

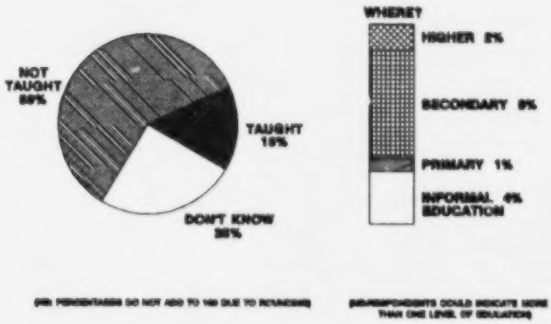

FIGURE 5

CONCLUSIONS

Most Bulgarians are very familiar with the United Nations and about one in four is able to name at least one UN body or institution. The vast majority of Bulgarians who expressed an opinion about the UN hold a favourable view about its work, especially regarding its efforts to foster mutual understanding between nations. Television and radio are the most widely used sources of information about the UN, although those who rely on the print media show greater levels of awarness and knowledge. Maintaining international peace and security and human rights are the issues of greatest interest for Bulgarians.

INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

	VERY INTERESTED %	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED %	NOT INTERESTED %
INT'L PEACE AND SECURITY	63	14	18
HUMAN RIGHTS	60	16	19
DISARMAMENT	57	17	21
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	56	14	23
CHILDREN'S ISSUES	50	19	24
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	48	21	25
CRIME PREVENTION	46	23	25
IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS	42	21	31
WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS	41	23	30
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT	40	24	29
AIDS	38	24	32
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN	37	25	32
DRUG ABUSE	34	24	35
REFUGEES & DISASTER RELIEF	33	25	35
THE WORK OF THE UN IN GENERAL	29	28	36
INT'L DEBT CRISIS	27	26	40
INT'L LAW & TREATIES	23	23	47
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	23	28	42
POPULATION ISSUES	18	27	47
DECOLONIZATION	15	22	55
NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	15	21	56
APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	12	23	57
AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY	8	22	61

(SOME RESPONDENTS INDICATED "DON'T KNOW" OR GAVE NO ANSWER TO SOME OF THE ISSUES

FIGURE 6

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

The poll was conducted in Bulgaria in December 1990, by the Balkan British Social Surveys (BBSS), an affiliate of Gallup International London, which allowed the United Nations Department of Public Information to publish the findings. They interviewed a nationwide representative sample of 1,492 men and women aged 18 and over. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes. The margin of sampling error is estimated at ± 3 per cent.

The Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the United Nations Department of Public Information undertakes public opinion polls to "analyse trends of public opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations is being secured". General Assembly resolution 13(1), paragraph 13, Annex 1 of 13 February 1946.

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